



NOAA, NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE

Miami, Florida 33165

<http://weather.gov/southflorida>

2010 Rainy Season Underway



Miami, June 2008. Photo Courtesy: Nestor Yglesias

The afternoon thunderstorms of the past two days have signaled the beginning of the rainy season in South Florida. The 2010 rainy season officially began on Sunday, May 16th, which is four days earlier than the median start date of May 20th. This means that the pattern of showers and thunderstorms which develop over the southern Florida peninsula during the afternoon and evening hours will be a near-daily occurrence throughout the summer and early fall, not to mention the constant mugginess that is a hallmark of this time of year in South Florida.

One general indicator of the onset of the rainy season is when the dewpoint reaches 70 degrees or higher and remain above 70 degrees for the foreseeable future. The dewpoint is a measure of humidity levels at the surface, but can also be a reflection of higher moisture levels aloft. This increased

atmospheric moisture, along with the daily sea breezes which develop over the Florida peninsula during the midday and early afternoon hours, are the triggers for the showers and thunderstorms that mark the rainy season. The overall rainfall pattern is determined by the prevailing wind flow. During westerly wind patterns common in May and June, eastern sections of South Florida see most of the afternoon and evening storms. In July, the prevailing wind usually shifts to an easterly direction, pushing most of the showers and thunderstorms to the interior and Gulf coast sections of South Florida. During August and September, tropical systems can influence the overall rainfall pattern across the region, with a greater potential for widespread rains over a large part of South Florida. The rainy season typically comes to end in mid-October when cold fronts and their accompanying cool and dry air masses make their return to South Florida.

The South Florida rainy season is accompanied by a greater frequency of lightning and severe weather such as hail, flooding, gusty winds and even tornadoes, particularly during the months of May, June and July. June and July are historically the deadliest months as far as lightning is concerned. An average of 2 people die each year from lightning strikes in South Florida, with an additional 9 injured. Therefore, it is very important to follow a basic lightning safety rule: [When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!](#)

The long-range outlook for this rainy season is for near normal precipitation, which is anywhere between 33 and 44 inches between now and mid-October, with coastal areas generally receiving less precipitation than interior locations.

For the latest south Florida weather information, including the latest watches, advisories and warnings, please visit the National Weather Service Miami Forecast Office's web site at weather.gov/southflorida.